

CHAPTER 6

THE OBOE AND THE COR ANGLAIS

6.1 Introduction

The following chapter is a condensation of the author's Master's dissertation of 1994, entitled "The use of the oboe and cor anglais in the fifteen Symphonies of Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)".

This chapter will include a shortened version and select music examples of the most important findings of the analysis. Similar to the MMus, the oboe and cor anglais will be discussed together.

In comparison with the piccolo, Shostakovich's treatment of the oboe and cor anglais is a little more reserved, yet equally challenging while exploiting all the possibilities of each instrument. The distinct intense tone of the oboe and the melancholic lower voice of the cor anglais are masterfully blended in various roles in the symphonies. The listener becomes increasingly aware of Shostakovich's skilful use of the oboe and cor anglais to convey a deeper meaning in the symphonies, particularly by using the inherently sad qualities of the instruments evidenced in solo material.

The oboes are used in all the symphonies (except Symphony No. 14). Shostakovich included an array of solo material for the oboes in most symphonies, yet excluding solos in symphonies No. 2, 11, 13 and 14. The cor anglais is scored in symphonies No. 4, 6-8, 10, 11 and 13 with significant solos in all of them. Shostakovich generally uses two oboes. He extends the oboe section to three oboes in symphonies No. 10 and 13, in which case the third oboe player doubles as the cor anglais player. Shostakovich uses four oboes only once: in Symphony No. 4. The fourth oboe also doubles with the cor anglais.

During the course of this chapter the author alludes to additional general information included in the MMus dissertation regarding trills and tremolos, repeated notes, rhythmic aspects, time

signatures and tempo indications. The format of the chapter will however, remain virtually the same as the other chapters.

6.2 Articulation

Articulation is a vital part of tone production on the oboe and cor anglais. Rothwell (1968:33) equates tonguing with the bowing on stringed instruments. When the player has real tongue control, guided by a sense of style and musicianship, the effect is like a fine string player using the bow. All forms of articulation markings in the score, for example *legato*, *staccato*, *non legato* and double tonguing, require the utmost sensitivity of approach by the player. This is especially pertinent and characteristic of Shostakovich's symphonies in passages of different dynamic levels, speed and character.

There are many instances in the symphonies where the oboe and cor anglais player would consider using double to triple tonguing. Some players use double and triple tonguing more consistently than others, while some are capable of a very fast single tonguing technique. The individual jaw, teeth and mouth formation will dictate to the player which technique is best. If the player chooses to double-tongue or triple-tongue a passage, care must be taken to attain the same quality of articulation on each note and avoid uneven accents.

Shostakovich's use of *legato* articulation for the oboe and cor anglais, especially in solo material, is accompanied by the words *espressivo*, *dolce* and, less seldom, *semplice*. In *tutti* and solo writing more *legato* ascending passages than descending ones are found in the oboe and cor anglais parts. Most semiquaver figures are articulated *legato*. With the exception of solo passages, Shostakovich does not write long and difficult *legato* phrases, the average length of a *legato* figure being two to three bars.

An example of a characterful *legato* solo for cor anglais and oboe is found in the third movement of Symphony No. 10 (Ex. 6-1). A significant characteristic of the third and fourth movements of Symphony 10 is Shostakovich's repeated use of his signature motive: D-S-C-H (German spelling for the notes D, E-flat, C and B). Schwartz (1983:280) came to the conclusion that Shostakovich used this "motto" theme frequently, in the Symphony No. 1 (1924-1925), the Fifth Quartet (1949) and Eighth Quartet (1960), and the Concertos for Violin (No. 1: 1947; No. 2: 1967) and

for Cello (No. 1: 1959; No. 2: 1966). The third movement includes another motive used equally as much as the signature motive, consisting of variants of the first eight notes played by the cor anglais between mm. 243-245. The solo for cor anglais is written in a very comfortable range and is supported by Shostakovich's characteristic *pizzicato* string accompaniment in mm. 245-252. A warm timbre is achieved between mm. 255-271 by the bassoons and contrabassoons, which accompany the cor anglais solo with *staccato* articulation, enhancing and supporting the mostly *legato* solo. A variation of the D-S-C-H motive is seen in the second bassoon and contrabassoon parts in mm. 262-265 with the notes D-flat, E-flat, C-flat, A-flat and D-flat. The oboe joins in as soloist in m. 265 with a *pp staccato* canon that becomes *legato* in m. 278. The delicate combination of instruments and subtle articulation creates the atmosphere of an elegant waltz.

Example 6-1: Symphony No. 10, third movement, mm. 241-282

♩ = 96

121 *solo*
p semplice

Cingl.

T-tam

mp

p

pp

mp

p

pp

mp

p

pp

mp

pp

241

122 ♩ = 138
p semplice

Cingl.

Fag.

C-fag.

T-tam

mp

p

pp

mp

p

pp

mp

p

pp

251

123 *pp*

Ob.

Cingl.

Fag.

C-fag.

pp

pp

pp

pp

260

124

Ob. I

Cingl. *espress. cresc. mf*

Fag.

C.fag.

V.le *arco p*

V.c. *arco p*

C.b. *arco p*

268

125

Ob. I solo *p*

Cingl. *cresc. f p*

V.le *p*

V.c. *p*

C.b. *pizz. p*

276

Shostakovich has written some delightful *staccato* passages for the oboe and cor anglais, but most intriguing is the growth of *staccato* material seen between the early and later symphonies. There are fewer *staccato* passages for the oboe and cor anglais in the early symphonies in Symphonies No. 1-8, with the exception of Symphony No. 4 (see Ex. 6-3 and 6-8). It is, however, from the last movement of Symphony No. 8 that Shostakovich begins to write delicately witty passages that bring out the less serious characteristics of the instruments. Shostakovich's use of *staccato* articulation in the oboes and cor anglais, whether in a solo or as accompaniment, usually indicates the composer's intention to add a little wit or to lighten the tone of a passage. This is evidenced in the number of *staccato* passages used in the symphonies known to have light-hearted moments, albeit black humour, like Symphony No. 9, the second movement ("Humour") of Symphony No. 13, and Symphony No. 15.

Shostakovich makes more use of *non legato* articulation in the early symphonies and less toward the later ones which have more *staccato* articulation. Most repeated notes and motives are articulated *non legato*. The fourth movement of Symphony No. 5 presents the player with an exhausting 66 bars of uninterrupted *non legato* playing.

There are several opportunities in the symphonies where the oboist can use double or triple tonguing instead of single tonguing, especially in the fast movements and *tutti* sections. The following example taken from the first movement of Symphony No. 4 (Ex. 6-2) contains a section Stedman calls a "woodwind toccata" (1979:303) in which the first oboe might consider using double tonguing in mm. 499, 510, 511 and 512, especially on the demisemiquavers. The exposed nature of the ensemble obliges the oboist to ensure a very clean and even performance.

Example 6-2: Symphony No. 4, first movement, mm. 497-515

$\text{♩} = 108$

53

Picc. *I*

Ob. *I solo*

Cl. picc. *f* \rightarrow *p*

Cl. III

Cl. IV *Cl. IV (A) muta in Cl. B*

Cl. b.

Fag. *I* *p* *II* *p*

C-fag. *III solo* *p*

497

54

Picc. *p*

Ob. *I* *f marc.*

Cl. picc. *I*

Fag. *II*

C-fag. *III*

504

4.1 Allocation of solo material to the oboe

The solo material for the oboe is written for a player with a skilled understanding of the instrument's technical and expressive capabilities.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), and C-Bassoon (C-fag.). The Oboe part has a box containing the number '55' above it, indicating the start of a solo section. The Clarinet part has the word 'Solo' written above it. The Bassoon part has 'I' and 'II' written below it, indicating different parts of the instrument. The C-Bassoon part has a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking below it. The score is written on four staves with various musical notations including notes, rests, and articulation marks.

The solo material for the oboe is written for a player with a skilled understanding of the instrument's technical and expressive capabilities.

One can also find a poignant solo in the oboe part of Symphony No. 3 (Ex. 4-3). One can also find a poignant solo in the oboe part of Symphony No. 3 (Ex. 4-3).

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6.3 Allocation of solo material to the oboe

The solo material for the oboe reveals Shostakovich's skilled understanding of the instrument's technical and lyrical capabilities as well as consideration for the players.

A wide range of dynamic indications accompany the oboe solos, unlike the cor anglais whose predominantly allocated dynamic range is *piano*. Evidence of Shostakovich's sensitivity and sympathy for the player is seen time and again throughout the symphonies by allowing sufficient rests in solo passages and avoiding long phrases, thereby preserving their stamina. Solo passages are sometimes given to the second oboe and cor anglais in unison or in thirds, sixths or otherwise. The longest solo for the oboe of 35 bars is found in the first movement of Symphony No. 7. The bassoon and first oboe have the solo in free imitation. Typical of Shostakovich's style, oboe and cor anglais solos are often supported by a characteristic *tremolo* accompaniment in the strings, or by sustained strings or low woodwinds.

Shostakovich exploits the melancholy character of the oboe time and again throughout the symphonies. A typical example of this is found in a poignant solo in imitation with the first clarinet in the first movement of Symphony No. 5 (Ex. 6-3). One can already detect a development in Shostakovich's solo writing for the oboe from the previous four symphonies as a wider spectrum in register and dynamic fluctuation is used. The dynamic contouring follows a natural curve in this solo, from *piano* in the middle register in m. 283 to a *forte* dynamic level in m. 288, as the oboe reaches the high register, and the dynamic decline as the melody descends and dwindles into *pianissimo* in m. 294. The temperament conveyed in Symphony No. 5 could be a direct reflection of Shostakovich's circumstances. Wilson (1993:126) notes that it took Shostakovich a year to gather up his strength and start his Symphony No. 5, which was seen as a public vindication of the humiliating and unfair criticism the composer had suffered. Between Symphonies No. 4 and 5 Shostakovich wrote only one serious and highly personal work, the *Four Pushkin Romances* Op. 46, which remained unperformed until 1940 (three years after the first performance of Symphony No. 5). For the rest of the time Shostakovich limited his output to music for the cinema, which was partly for the sake of a steady income. Film music gave him an opportunity to prove his identification with Soviet themes of actual relevance, in other words to placate the authorities.

Example 6-3: Symphony No. 5, first movement, mm. 282-299

$\text{♩} = 84$

42

Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Fag.

Archi

282

Musical score for measures 287-292. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), and Archi (Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses). The woodwinds play a melodic line with dynamics *cresc.*, *f*, and *dim.*. The strings are silent.

287

Musical score for measures 293-302. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), Cor Anglais (Cor.), and Archi (Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses). A rehearsal mark **48** is present above the Oboe staff. Dynamics include *ppp*, *f*, *dim.*, and *con sord.*. The woodwinds and strings play a melodic line.

293

Another example of the oboe's melancholic voice is found in the second movement (*Moderato*) of Symphony No. 7 (Ex. 6-4). The infinitely searching oboe solo written mainly in the middle register is set against an agitated *piano ostinato* string section and joined after 26 bars by the cor anglais in m. 59. Shostakovich creates an added interest to the bass as two bassoons take up the accompaniment for two bars. The cor anglais leads the music into deeper meditation amid sombre tones from the contrabassoon from m. 71.

Ob. I
V-nl I
V-nl II
V-c.
C-b.
47

Ob. I
V-nl I
V-nl II
V-le
V-c.
C-b.
52 p

Ob. I
Cingl.
Fag.
Archl.
57 PP

Cingl.
Archl.
62 pp

80

Musical score for measures 67-72. The score includes staves for Cingl., Cl. b.(B), Fag., C-fag., V-ni II, V-le, V-o., and C-b. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. Measure 67 is marked with a double bar line. Measure 72 is marked with a double bar line. Dynamics include *p* and *f*.

Musical score for measures 72-80. The score includes staves for Cingl., Cl. (A), Cl. b., Fag., C-fag., V-ni I, V-ni II, V-le, V-o., and C-b. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. Measure 72 is marked with a double bar line. Measure 80 is marked with a double bar line. Dynamics include *cresc.*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *espress.*, *div.*, and *f*. Performance markings include *I. II a2*, *II*, *a2*, *I*, *v*, and *pp*.

Shostakovich's expressive use of dynamics is illustrated in the opening of the *Finale* of Symphony No. 10 (Ex. 6-5). It is marked *Andante* and, as in the first movement, it heaves into existence on cellos and basses. The first oboe sings a solemn song from m. 8 which increases in volume into an agitated quadruplet figure in m. 14, only to fade into a *piano* dynamic as the phrase ends in m. 18. After a brief rest, the oboe enters at a *forte* dynamic level in mm. 18-20 with a melody that rises and falls from G-sharp and is echoed plaintively at a *piano* dynamic from mm. 20-23. Shostakovich includes the characteristic transparent string accompaniment throughout the solo, and adds an ominous sounding timpani roll from m. 19. The introvert nature of the opening of the final movement belies the gaiety that follows in the rest of the movement.

Example 6-5: Symphony No. 10, fourth movement, mm. 1-27

IV

2 Oboi

Violini I

Violini II

Viola

Violoncelli

Contrabassi

144 Andante $\text{♩} = 126$

145 Solo *p dolce*

p *morendo* *morendo*

Ob. *I* *cresc.* *f*

Archl *p* *non cresc.*

10

Ob. *I* *dim.* *p* *f* *p* **146**

Timp. *p*

Archl *div.* *p*

16

Fl. **147** *I* *cresc.* *f*

Ob. *I*

Timp. *non cresc.*

Archl *non cresc.*

22

6.4 Allocation of solo material to the cor anglais

The whole compass of the cor anglais' tone is tinged with a curious shade of reflection, of sadness, and of melancholy. "In expressing ideas of sorrow and regret the instrument seems to have almost more personality than any other in the orchestra". (Forsyth 1982:222.)

Shostakovich ingeniously exploits the lyrically melancholic character inherent to the cor anglais in the symphonies. The cor anglais is used in the following seven symphonies: Nos. 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 13. Each of these symphonies has examples of solo material for the cor anglais.

The cor anglais is used for the first time in Symphony No. 4 with a solo that shows off the instrument's inherent melancholic tone in all of its registers in a broad spectrum of dynamic levels (Ex. 6-6). The cor anglais, in the warm lowest part of its range (B-natural in m. 940), and bass clarinet complement one another in tranquil conversation in a *piano espressivo* melody that develops in contrary motion. As the *con sordino* strings take over the spartan accompaniment from m. 950 the cor anglais becomes more agitated rhythmically as the dynamic level increases to a *forte* in m. 958 and yet subsides again two bars later. The mood of the rest of the solo for the cor anglais changes instantly to that of nervousness from mm. 962-968 with the onset of the *tremolo col arco* string accompaniment.

Example 6-6: Symphony No. 4, first movement, mm. 935-976

The musical score for Example 6-6, Symphony No. 4, first movement, mm. 935-976, is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff is for the Oboe (Ob.), followed by the Cor Anglais (C. Ingl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Bass Clarinet (Cl. b.). The bottom section of the score is for the strings (Archi). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 92. The Cor Anglais part begins with a solo melody in the lower register, marked *pp*. The Bass Clarinet part provides a complementary line, also marked *pp*. The string section is marked *p*. The Cor Anglais part features a section marked *P espress.* and *dim.*. The string section is marked *p35*.

C.ingl.
Cl. b.
944

C.ingl. 97
V-ni I
V-le
V-c. 950
cresc. poco a poco
con sord. pizz.
con sord. pizz.
con sord. div. p espress.
unis.
pizz.

C.ingl. 98
V-ni I
V-ni II
V-le
V-c. 956
riten.
f dim. p cresc.
(p)
arco
arco
arco
p

C.ingl.
V-ni I
V-ni II
V-le
V-c.
C-b.
963
♩ = 60
dim. p
arco

99 $\text{♩} = 108$

C.ingl. *solo*

V-ni I *div. altri* *senza cord. b.* [*mf*]

V-ni II

V-le *pp senza espress.*

V-c. *espress.* *dim.* *pp*

C-b. *espress.*

969

Cor anglais solos are mostly scored in the middle and lower registers. However, the first movement of Symphony No. 8 includes a solo for the cor anglais chiefly in its upper register with the characteristic *pianissimo* string *tremolo* accompaniment. The longest and surely the most exhausting cor anglais solo of 73 bars is found in the fourth movement of Symphony No. 11.

Shostakovich makes use of comfortably short phrases, which seldom exceed six bars in length. In general, slurs are two to three bars in length. The length of solos, however, varies from the most often used length of approximately nine bars, to solos of unusually taxing lengths. The longest oboe solos are found in the following symphonies: 7:1 (35 bars); 10:3 (45 bars); and 11:4 (73 bars). Cor anglais solos are generally longer than solos for the oboe, possibly because it requires less stamina and is easier to blow because of its larger reed. The average length of a cor anglais solo is approximately 12 bars.

Repeated notes in Shostakovich's symphonies in many instances serve to create excitement and speed up or intensify dramatic action. It serves to maintain momentum and movement in static chordal passages. Shostakovich frequently makes use of repeated notes in his symphonic writing for the oboe and cor anglais. Repeated notes are generally not difficult to execute on the oboe and cor anglais but nevertheless require control, especially in fast tempos and at quiet dynamic levels.

Numerous examples of repeated notes are found in every symphony. It is, however, noticeable that from Symphony No. 3 Shostakovich scores repeated notes more frequently and ventures into the higher register of the oboe. Many excellent examples of lengthy passages of repeated notes within extreme dynamic levels and very dense textures are found in Symphony No. 4. Repeated notes of up to 35 bars in length are recorded in the later symphonies. The dominating dynamic indication scored with the repeated notes is *forte*, regardless of the register.

A unique example of repeated notes scored for three oboes and cor anglais in a solo capacity is found in the first movement of Symphony No. 4 (Ex. 6-7). Three oboes begin a characterful solo of diminished chords in m. 37 that is continued by the first oboe until m. 39. The second and third oboes support the solo whose conversational *staccato* accompaniment commences in m. 38 in repeated notes, joined by the cor anglais in m. 39. The first oboe concludes its brief solo by

joining the other oboes and the cor anglais in the chordal *staccato* repeated notes in mm. 40-42 that become an accompaniment to solo material for the bassoon and first violins. The *staccato* repeated accompaniment notes resembles Shostakovich's characteristic string *pizzicato* as accompaniment.

Example 6-7: Symphony No. 4, first movement, mm. 35-45

$\text{♩} = 92$

Ob. I
Ob. II, III
C.ingl.
Archl.
35

Ob. I
Ob. II, III
C.ingl. muta in Ob. IV
Fag.
V-n I
39

An example of a very dense texture created by the whole orchestra playing repeated notes is found in the first movement of Symphony No. 4. Ottaway (1979:19-20) writes that this symphony, particularly the first movement, contains some passages, which are greatly over scored. An almost deliberate grotesqueness is achieved in the many lengthy *tutti* passages in which all the instruments are scored with extreme dynamic indications. The orchestra is the largest required in a Shostakovich symphony: quadruple woodwind, with the addition (non doubling) of two piccolos, an E-flat clarinet, eight horns, four trumpets, three trombones, two tubas, two sets of timpani and a large percussion group, two harps, and strings (up to 84 recommended).

Repeated notes are clearly part of Shostakovich's writing style for the whole orchestra. Fortunately for the oboist not many examples of repeated notes in the low register at a *piano* dynamic level are found. Articulated low notes on the oboe are difficult, especially at a *piano* dynamic level. The most examples of repeated note entries in the lower register is found in the experimental Symphony No. 2.

He frequently scored repeated notes in the high register for the oboe and cor anglais and many specific examples can be found in Symphonies No. 3, 4, 10 and 11.

No *tremolos* are found in the oboe and cor anglais parts in Shostakovich's symphonies. Trills, however, are an important part of his style with many examples for the oboe and cor anglais. Shostakovich's aim with the use of trills, for the oboe and cor anglais and the rest of the orchestra, is to create an atmosphere of tension, as he rarely uses trills in a frivolous or decorative sense. Trills for the oboe and cor anglais are mainly written in the middle register. There are no instances of a difficult or even a "barely possible" trill. Trills are mostly scored with a *fortissimo* dynamic indication and the oboe and cor anglais trills are always coupled with high woodwind and strings, never in isolation or as part of a solo. Trills are mostly included as part of secondary material. However, Symphonies No. 5, 6, 10 and 13 contain examples of trills as part of the primary melodic material. The fourth movement of Symphony No. 5 begins with a *tutti* trill and the first movement of Symphony No. 13 ends with a trill.

A fascinating example teeming with trills occurs in Symphony No. 6 (Ex. 6-8). Eight bars of continuous trills involving the woodwind and string section are found in the first movement.

The trills are secondary, if not accompaniment, to the blaring brass vying for attention amongst the rest of the orchestra. The strings have an F-sharp trill from m. 59 which gains momentum and volume as the woodwinds are added in m. 60 one after the other from the lowest to the highest pitch to the *fortissimo* F-sharp trill. From m. 61 the *ff* melody, which now includes woodwinds and strings, descends chromatically in octave unison trills with a *diminuendo poco a poco* dynamic indication. From m. 65 the melody of trills dies down one by one from the woodwinds until only the violas remain with a trill (m. 68) which becomes part of the accompaniment to a beautiful and searching new cor anglais solo (mm. 70-80). The first three bars of the cor anglais solo in mm. 70-73 (which precedes the flute solo by a few bars), resembles the ensuing flute solo (see Ex. 4-5) in melodic material as well as in its yearning atmosphere.

Example 6-8: Symphony No. 6, first movement, mm. 58-82

♩ = 44

12

Picc. *tenufo* *f* *ff* *ff*

Fl. *a2 tenufo* *f oroso* *ff* *ff*

Ob. *a2* *ff* *ff*

Cingl.

Cl. picc. *ff* *ff*

Cl. *a2* *ff* *ff*

Cl. b.

Fag. *a2* *ff*

C-fag. *ff*

Tr-be *I sola* *f espress.* *oroso* *ff* *III* *ff dim. poco a poco*

Timp. *ff*

Archl. *ff* *div. b.* *ff*

58

This page of a musical score covers measures 12 through 16. The instruments are arranged in the following order from top to bottom: Piccolo (Pico.), Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in G (C.ingl.), Clarinet in E-flat (Cl. picc.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl.), Bass Clarinet (Cl. b.), Bassoon (Fag.), Contrabassoon (C-fag.), Trumpet (Tr-be), Horn (Cor.), Trombone (Tr-ni), Tuba, and Timpani (Timp.). The woodwinds and strings play a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with various dynamics and articulations. The brass instruments have more melodic lines, with the Trombone and Tuba playing a prominent *ff espress.* line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *dim.*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *ff*, as well as performance instructions like *espress. tenuto*. A rehearsal mark '13' is placed above the Piccolo staff in measure 13. The page number '62' is at the bottom left, and the number '9245' is at the bottom center.

14 Poco più mosso e poco rubato

$\text{♩} = 52$ solo

C.ingl. *pespress.*

Cl. b. *ppp*

Cor. *dim.* *ppp*

Timp. *p*

V-le *p*

V-o. *pizz.*

C-b. *pp* *unis.* *pizz.* *p*

67

15

C.ingl. *stacc.* *3*

Timp. *p*

V-le *pp* *arco v* *dolce*

V-o. *pp* *dolce*

C-b. *pp* *dolce* *(pizz.)*

73

16

C.ingl.

Tr-be *I. II con sord.* *pp*

Timp.

Arpa *mf*

V-le

V-o. *pizz.*

C-b.

78

6.5 Dynamic aspects

Shostakovich's use of dynamic indications for the oboe and cor anglais range between *ppp* and *ffff*. In all the Symphonies the *f* - *ffff* dynamic indication accompanied by expressive indications like *marcato* and *espressivo* is used much more often than the *p* - *mp* dynamic level. The *piano* dynamic level is used mainly for lyrical solo passages and phrases with exposed textures. In many instances there are as few as two or three *piano* phrases as opposed to an entire movement of *ff* dynamic levels. Bearing in mind the limited dynamic range of the oboe and cor anglais it is questionable whether the dynamic level exceeding *fff* is practical, especially in the high register. It can be concluded that the hard, dry quality of the high register in excessive dynamic indications form the predominant timbre Shostakovich calls for from these instruments in his symphonies.

Upwards from A above the staff the oboe tone gradually becomes thinner, and above D begins to sound less like an oboe. These high tones do not possess the warmth of the range below A, but they are useful for adding brilliance to the woodwinds. Of the higher notes, G-sharp and A are impractical. They are insecure of production and lack quality. F-sharp and G-natural are not often used but are more playable (Piston 1982:152-153). Shostakovich seldom uses the notes F and F-sharp above the stave and never the notes higher than G.

The following is a typical example of Shostakovich's use of the oboe in its high register, at a *piano* dynamic level, in the third movement (*Largo*) of Symphony No. 5 to create one of the most lachrymose solos yet (Ex. 6-9). The grievous atmosphere is intensified by the chilling effect of the first violins' *tremolo ostinato*. MacDonald (1990:130) writes that during this movement it is no wonder that the Leningrad audience began to cry. "Understanding music like this is simple – particularly if half your family have been arrested and you are alone and terrified and trying to smile." The oboe solo aptly conveys the sentiment described by MacDonald in the solo with its subtle combination of register, dynamic level and articulation.

Example 6-9: Symphony No. 5, third movement, mm. 67-78

$\text{♩} = 72$

Ob. 84 *I solo*

V-nl I *dim.* *pp*

V-nl II

C-b. 67

Ob. *I*

V-nl I 72 85 *pp*

V-nl II

The low register of the oboe is very hard to control at a soft dynamic level, which causes difficulties when trying to match the soft ensemble of other woodwinds. In direct contrast to the flute the oboe increases in intensity in the lower fifth of its range. Here it is the problem of the oboist to subdue the natural tendency to loudness and even coarseness. The low B-flat is seldom found in scores. It cannot be attacked softly, and it is more appropriate for music of a robust character (Piston 1982:152). The cor anglais, however, in its lower fifth or sixth is richly beautiful with tremendous expressive carrying power (Adler 1982:174).

It can be concluded that Shostakovich was aware of the difficulties player's experience with playing softly in the low register of the oboe and cor anglais because he very seldom uses the oboe and cor anglais in their low register in the symphonies.

There are more examples of *forte* passages in the high register for the oboes than for the cor anglais. This is probably because the cor anglais has a thin sounding upper register and does not have much impact at a loud dynamic level. Symphony No. 7 contains the most examples of passages for the cor anglais in the high register.

No significant examples of *forte* passages in the low register are found in the early symphonies. From Symphony No. 5, however, loud passages are scored in the low register for both oboe and cor anglais. Symphony No. 7 also presents the most examples of loud passages in the low register for both oboes and cor anglais, which is not surprising bearing in mind the programme of the “Leningrad”.

According to Piston (1982:420) *staccato* and accents are better suited to the oboe than to the flute. Accents for the oboe and cor anglais are also suitable in the lower range but can sound “rather rough”. Shostakovich makes extensive use of accents throughout the symphonies. The most frequently used accent is the following indication: >. This accent is mostly used at a *forte* dynamic level and very seldom in *piano* passages. Very often the indication *fff espressivo* is used in combination with accents.

6.6 Rhythmic aspects

Rhythm and energy are synonymous with Shostakovich’s symphonic music and rhythm, in particular, plays a very important part in his general writing style.

After extensive analysis, however, the author did not find many rhythmic aspects that are extraordinary and exclusive to the oboe and cor anglais in the symphonies. Rhythmically the oboe and cor anglais are in most cases treated in a similar manner to the other woodwinds. The only outstanding rhythmic aspect is a few instances of polyrhythm allocated to the oboes and cor anglais in densely textured *tutti* sections, for example in the first, fourth and fifth movements of Symphony No. 8 and the first movement of Symphonies No. 10 and 15.

The sheer energy and nervous tension the symphonies exude are largely due to Shostakovich’s treatment of tempo and metre changes. Perpetual change in tempo indication and metre within a movement is a consistent characteristic of his symphonic music. Shostakovich uses verbal and metronome markings together. The composer also mostly uses metronome markings alone or words alone to indicate tempo.

Time signatures, like the tempo indications, are also frequently changed within a movement. Conductor and player alike are subject to time signature changes as often as 108 times in one

movement, as found in the first movement of Symphony No. 4. The first movement of Symphony No. 7 has nine tempo indication changes with words and metronome markings and 129 time signature changes.

6.7 The oboe and cor anglais in combination with other instruments

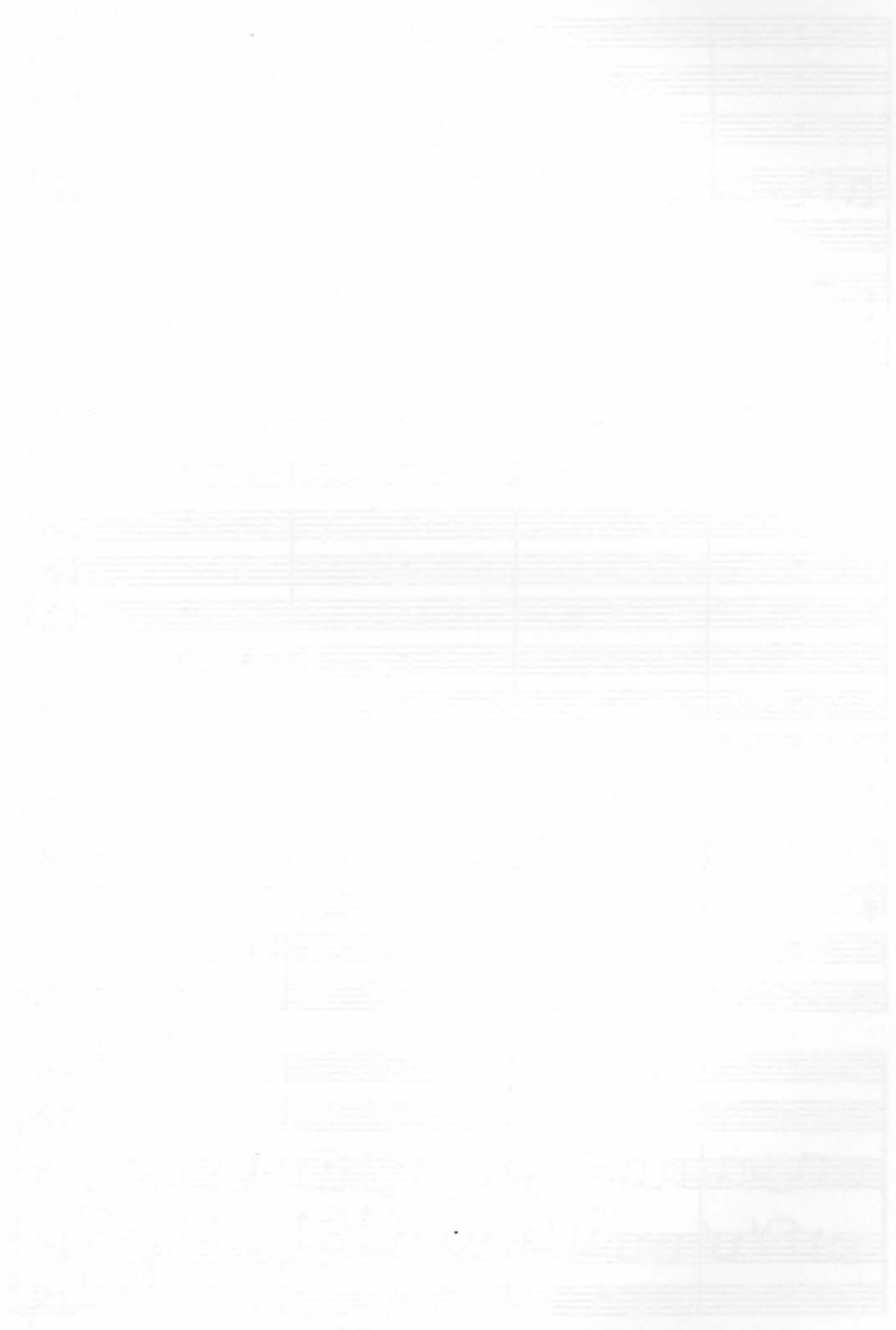
Piston (1982:359-360) states that very few instances of real unison doubling exist in orchestral literature because of the range limitations of some instruments. An orchestral *tutti* in which all the instruments are taking part cannot be regarded as being in unison but rather in unison with octave doubling. With octave doubling the orchestra is distributed over a few octaves, so that each instrument may participate in its best range.

Shostakovich makes extensive use of unison writing throughout his symphonies with novel instrument combinations. Shostakovich's use of unison *tutti* is only briefly prevalent in Symphonies No. 3, 5:1, 6:2, 11:2 and 13:3.

The traditional combination of woodwinds and strings in unison is used extensively throughout the symphonies. There is, however, a noticeable change in the instrument combinations with the oboe and cor anglais between the earlier and later works. Shostakovich increasingly scores combinations for the less common instruments such as the E-flat clarinet and contrabassoon, with aplomb. The oboe is most commonly scored in unison with the first and/or second violins, but seldom in unison with the violas. The combination of oboe, clarinet and violas, however, is often used in the earlier symphonies, in particular Symphonies No. 1-4. Symphonies No. 7 and 11 include the most examples of unison writing between the strings and woodwinds.

A characteristic example of actual unison between the lower woodwinds and lower strings is found in the stately opening theme of Symphony No. 6 (Ex. 6-10). Shostakovich created a dark though rich timbre by combining a cor anglais, two clarinets, two bassoons, violas and cellos in unison at a *f espressivo* dynamic level. The B-natural in m. 1 scored for the cor anglais is the lowest note the instrument can play. It is not technically as difficult to articulate low notes on the cor anglais as it is on the oboe. The cor anglais, however, is at its most beautiful in the lower part of its range. The pallid colours of the opening movement of Symphony No. 6 reminds the listener of the openness and transparency of Symphony No. 11, the "Palace Square". The

similarities are not only the open textures created by the effect of unison writing, but also the *piano* dynamic level and slow tempo indications.



Example 6-10: Symphony No. 6, first movement, mm. 1-4

I

Largo ♩ = 72

Piccolo

2 Flauti

2 Oboi

Corno inglese

Clarinetto piccolo (Es)

2 Clarinetti (B)

Clarinetto basso (B)

2 Fagotti

Contrafagotto

3 Trombe (B)

4 Corni (F)

3 Tromboni e Tuba

Timpani

Celesta

Arpa

Largo ♩ = 72

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

Contrabassi

Conflicting views of the positive and negative effects of certain woodwind combinations, as discussed in various orchestration manuals, were examined. For example, much has been written against combining similar wind instruments in unison. Despite this, Shostakovich very frequently makes use of like instruments in combination, especially in Symphonies No. 8, 10 and 11, because it adds to the rich open textures typical of his style.

An example of the controversial combination of oboe and clarinet in unison is found in an expressive solo in the second movement of Symphony No. 9 (Ex. 6-11). The result of the unison between the oboe and clarinet is a warm round sound with the oboe dominating the clarinet tone slightly. The combination is all the more effective because the oboe player uses vibrato and the clarinet is mostly played without a vibrato. The solo is supported by a *pianissimo* string accompaniment. The clarinet and oboe are playing in unison from m. 132 until m. 148 when they are joined by the second oboe and second clarinet to match the strength of the added bassoons and horns.

Shostakovich completed the entire score of Symphony No. 9 (1945) in a month. The symphony has a lightness to it in musical content and orchestration compared with the symphonies preceding it. Jackson (1997:56) states that the Soviet audience, expecting a major work comparable to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, received a "frivolous 25 minute *sinfonietta*, elegant to the point of exasperation, with just enough dissonance to hint at the sabotage going on beneath". The melancholic melody of the oboe and clarinet in the second movement of Symphony No. 9 (in Example 6-11), is witness to Shostakovich's surfacing seriousness which underlines the dual character of the symphony. Moments later the music breaks into a jollier tone.

Example 6-11: Symphony No. 9, second movement, mm. 130-149

Moderato

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 130 to 139, and the second system covers measures 140 to 149. The instruments are arranged as follows:

- Woodwinds:** Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. (B)), and Bassoon (Fag.).
- Brass:** Cor Anglais (Cor.).
- Strings:** Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello (Cello), and Contrabasso (Double Bass).

Key features of the score include:

- Measure 130:** The woodwinds and strings begin with a *pp* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The woodwinds play a melodic line with slurs and accents.
- Measure 137:** A rehearsal mark is present. The woodwinds play a melodic line with a *p espress.* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking.
- Measure 140:** The woodwinds and strings play a melodic line with a *mp* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking.
- Measure 147:** A rehearsal mark is present. The woodwinds and strings play a melodic line with a *f* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking.

The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p espress.*, *mp*, *f*, and *cresc.*, as well as performance instructions like *senza sord.* (without mutes) for the brass. The tempo is marked *Moderato*.

An example of a very novel combination of unison octave doubling is found in the second movement, “Humour” (*Scherzo*), of Symphony No. 13 involving the piccolo, cor anglais and the E-flat clarinet (Ex. 6-12). The direct translation of the Russian text in the example is the last line of the poem “Humour”: “He’s a brave fellow” (see Appendix B). The theme of this movement is a sarcastic and often deliberately crude interpretation of the irrepressible humour of the Soviet people. Ian MacDonald (1990:231) concluded that Shostakovich employs deliberate musical shorthand, with set rhythmic motives, throughout his works. The triplet or three-note figure, for example, represents “decency, folklore and simplicity”. MacDonald’s version adds an interesting dimension to the listener’s perception because the triplet plays a very important part in the second movement. The triplet can therefore be interpreted as the motive for the concept “humour”. The same interpretation could extend to Shostakovich’s unusual choice of three instruments in this example, which play the triplet figure – the piccolo, E-flat clarinet and cor anglais.

The piccolo is the highest of a three-tier melodic stack of three octaves in unison, with the E-flat clarinet in the middle and the cor anglais at the lower octave. The witty character is achieved not only by the timbre created by the instruments involved, but also by the accented triplet followed by *staccato* crotchets. In m. 468 the bass soloist and chorus join the expanding woodwind motive with repeated notes different in character at a *ff* dynamic level.

Example 6-12: Symphony No. 13, second movement, mm. 464-469

$\text{♩} = 116$

71

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

C. ingl.

Cl. picc.

Cl.

Fag.

C-fag.

Cor.

Tr-be

Tr-nl e Tuba

Timp.

T-ro

Basso solo

Coro

71

Arch.

464

Он мужественный че - ло -

Он мужественный че - ло -

According to Rimsky-Korsakov (1964:56) the trumpet is the instrument most frequently doubled in unison by the oboe, yet Shostakovich very seldom uses this combination. Shostakovich rarely combines the oboe and cor anglais with the complete brass section in unison; however, the combination oboe and/or cor anglais and horns is used more often, especially in Symphony No. 11. He clearly preferred to combine the soft timbre of the horns so as not to overpower the oboe and cor anglais, but to complement one another.

In Example 6-13 the cor anglais is used in an ensemble involving the bass clarinet, bassoons, trombones and tubas in the third movement of Symphony No. 8. The unremitting rhythmic accompaniment-like unison figure surges ahead at a *ff marcatisimo* dynamic level, and is interrupted by *ff* solo trombones and horns in mm. 158-160. The result of the unusual combination is a body of homogeneous sounds that blend particularly well, with no instrument overshadowing the other. The beginning of the movement opens with a military atmosphere of the violas playing the incessant crotchet motive, which is repeated over and over throughout the movement with the addition of more instruments. The addition of instruments one by one is typical of Shostakovich's style. He uses it to create intensity and volume.

87

Cingl.

Cl. b.

Fag. I, II III

Tr-be

Cor.

Tr-ni e Tuba a. 2 a. 2

Timp. 15/4

sola
ff

sola
ff

sf

sf

sf

sf

6.8 Conclusion

Shostakovich displays a skilful understanding of the lyrical and technical capabilities of the oboe and cor anglais throughout the symphonies. The oboe and cor anglais have generally been used in a conservative manner with no unusual demands or special effects. Shostakovich's writing style for the oboe and cor anglais is exciting with a wide variety of technically and musically challenging parts for the players.

The full ranges of both instruments have been used in *tutti* sections although the warm timbres of the middle registers are mostly reserved for solos. Shostakovich exploits the hard brazen sounds of the oboes in very loud dynamic levels combined with the high and extreme high register in *tutti* sections. Sustained, *tremolo* and *pizzicato* strings are typically used as accompaniment to oboe and cor anglais solos. Shostakovich frequently writes in unison for more than one of the

same instrument and also exploits unusual combinations like the oboe and clarinet in unison. The oboe and cor anglais are more likely to be combined with the horns than any other brass instrument. There is surprisingly very little significant doubling with choral parts in Symphonies No. 2, 3 and 13.