

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal motivation

The author's interest in the oboe as instrument began while studying at Stellenbosch University and receiving training under Gerrit Bon at the University of Cape Town. Since moving to the Transvaal in 1990 the author has received lessons from the first oboist of the Transvaal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sergei Burdukov, previously principal oboist of the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra. A keen interest in the music of Dmitri Shostakovich was prompted by the fact that Mr. Burdukov had been involved in the playing of the symphonies of Shostakovich with the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra with the composer's son, Maxim, as conductor. Through Mr. Burdukov an ardent interest in and an awareness of the "Russian" style of oboe playing was developed.

As an oboist the author has performed in, amongst others, the Stellenbosch University Symphony Orchestra with Eric Rycroft as conductor, the National Wind Ensemble with Frederic Fennel, the Pro Musica Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Weiss Doubell, the Pretoria University Symphony Orchestra with Alan Solomon, and the Bophuthatswana Chamber Orchestra with Clive Fairburn conducting. Through the abovementioned orchestras the author gained valuable experience in orchestral playing as principal oboist, second oboist and cor anglais player.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the analysis of the use of the oboe and cor anglais in the 15 Symphonies was to investigate Shostakovich's orchestration technique pertaining to the oboe and cor anglais. An in-depth look was taken to assess the "user-friendliness" of the writing from a performer's point of view. The author tried to determine whether there are specific stylistic characteristics which can be seen as typical of Shostakovich's style. An important aspect of

the study was to investigate specific works by other prominent symphonic composers in an attempt to trace the general trend of orchestration for the oboe and cor anglais.

1.3 Sources and materials

The principal sources for this study were the scores and recordings of Shostakovich's 15 symphonies. Biographical works have been used as well as orchestration manuals.

1.3.1 Biographical sources

A very interesting biographical source, although very controversial, is *The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (1979) by Solomon Volkov. The *Memoirs* capture the tone of musical life in the Soviet Union during the Shostakovich era from the perspective of personal experience. In a recent publication, *The New Shostakovich* (1991), Ian MacDonald's biographical work on the composer, he openly disputes the authenticity of the *Memoirs*. MacDonald also argues that Shostakovich's music cannot be grasped as pure music in isolation from its political-cultural framework. *The New Shostakovich* by MacDonald is, nevertheless, tiresome and difficult to read.

Many authors, however, seem hesitant to dismiss the *Memoirs* by Volkov. The testimony of other Russian composers and recent scholarly surveys of the life and work of Shostakovich suggest that the general tendency of Volkov's *Testimony* is true enough.

The biography by Roseberry, *Shostakovich: The Illustrated Lives of Great Composers* (1983), is comprehensive and easy to read, with interesting information gleaned from newspaper reports, poster images as well as quotes from fellow artists, journalists, politicians and critics. Roseberry (1983:186) writes the following about the Shostakovich-Volkov *Memoirs*:

These Memoirs have been disputed in the Soviet Union and questioned by certain leading authorities in the West. However, it seemed to me relevant to quote, where appropriate to my story, from a personal source which was indisputably close to the composer in his late years and who so obviously knew

and understood something of the Soviet scene from a dissident Russo-Semitic angle. (It should be noted that Boris Schwarz, in his article on Shostakovich in the new Grove, is not prepared to dismiss Volkov's book as a fake, though one must remain uneasy about certain aspects of this fascinating publication.)

The author of this dissertation agrees with Roseberry that the *Memoirs* by Volkov should not be disregarded as they lend an interesting, if not subjective, perspective on Shostakovich's life.

1.3.2 Books on the analysis of Shostakovich's symphonies

Two very important books on the general analysis of the 15 symphonies by Shostakovich are *Shostakovich Symphonies* (BBC Music Guides) by Ottaway (1979) and *The Music of Dmitri Shostakovich* by Blokker and Dearling (1979). *The Symphony* by Stedman (1979) is an excellent source as it traces the most significant development of the symphony from the Baroque to the Twentieth Century. A recent publication by Layton, also tracing the development of the symphony, is entitled *A Companion to the Symphony* (1993) and is also highly recommended.

1.3.3 Orchestration manuals

The most useful and particularly informative of the orchestration manuals are by Adler, Blatter and Piston. *The Study of Orchestration* by Adler (1989) is very usefully divided into two sections. The first section deals with Instrumentation and all aspects of instrument ranges, techniques and timbres. There is also an examination of how the instruments of a choir or group combine amongst themselves as well as with other orchestral families. Part 2 deals with Orchestration and includes, amongst others, major scoring problems. Blatter's *Instrumentation/Orchestration* (1980) is highly recommendable as it is very thorough and aimed at both the beginner and the more advanced student. There are chapters on score preparation, transcribing and arranging, instrument ranges and qualities. Detailed information is available of less common instruments, contemporary techniques and possibilities and an extensive fingering chart for all instruments. The approach of this book,

unlike many others, is to advocate what an instrument *can* do. *Orchestration* by Piston (1982) is also very recommendable as emphasis is placed on the method of the study of orchestration. Particularly useful is the section on typical problems in orchestration. Examples and their solutions are given. Another source worth mentioning is the *Anatomy of the Orchestra* by Del Mar (1983) which deals very thoroughly with the woodwind section.

1.3.4 Other sources

The PhD thesis by Moschevich entitled *Shostakovich as interpreter of his own Music: A Study of recorded performances* (1987), completed at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, was an important source. The study is also analytical in nature and includes interesting conclusions regarding aspects involving Shostakovich's piano music.

1.3.5 Recordings

The author endeavoured in most cases to obtain Soviet recordings of the symphonies. A very good and recommended series of recordings of the symphonies are by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy. A full list of the recordings consulted is listed in the Sources under "Sound recordings".

1.3.6 Scores

During the course of this study numerous published scores of Shostakovich and other composers were consulted.

It should be noted that the Shostakovich scores used fall into two categories, namely the unamended and the amended versions. Those examples of scores used throughout the dissertation are from the authoritative *New Soviet Edition of Shostakovich's Collected Works*, comprising 42 volumes to date, published between 1980-1985 in Moscow by the State Publishers *Music*. The works published in these volumes are in accordance with the last editions which appeared in the composer's lifetime; the first publications are founded on

autographs or copies endorsed by the composer. The texts are collated with Shostakovich's manuscripts, proof sheets, manuscript and printed copies containing his corrections, records of his performances and other available material. All errors discovered in manuscript or printed copies are corrected without comment. The editor's notes and comments on the autograph pages, which are included at the beginning of each volume, are of particular interest and help.

1.4 Research method

Preceded by a thorough biographical and orchestration study, the oboe and cor anglais parts of all of Shostakovich's symphonic scores were assembled and carefully studied. Symphony No. 14 is omitted from the analysis as the symphony is scored for strings, percussion and solo voices only. The symphonies were analysed under the following headings: tonguing and articulation, melodic aspects, dynamic aspects, rhythmic aspects, and the oboe and cor anglais in combination with other instruments. All findings were catalogued in a card system.

1.5 Organisation of the dissertation



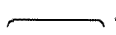

Chapter 1 provides general information about the study, including a list of the number of movements, approximate duration, première dates of each symphony, and the conductors of the premières (see Chapter 1.6). Chapter 2 consists of a short biography divided into the following sections:

- Childhood (1906-1917);
- The student and rising composer (1917-1938). This section includes the English translations of the poems used in Symphony No. 2 "*To October*", and Symphony No. 3 "*The first of May*";
- The World War II years (1939-1945);
- The post Stalin years (1953-1966). The English translation of the original version of the poem "*Babi Yar*", which is the first movement to Symphony No. 13, is also included;

- Influences; and
- A personal profile.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion of the writings for the oboe and cor anglais by other prominent symphonic composers and by Shostakovich. The chapter endeavours to create an historical overview of the use of the oboe and cor anglais from Beethoven until Shostakovich. Chapters 4-8 consist of the results of the systematic analysis. The final chapter includes a summary of the conclusions drawn in this study. Appendix A contains a complete list of the instrumentation of Shostakovich's 15 symphonies. Appendix B provides a list of music examples. The List of Sources is divided into three sections: books, articles and dissertations; scores; and sound recordings.

1.6 Abbreviations and signs

- When including music examples, conserving space was a problem because of the size of the full score. In certain examples the less relevant sections of the score are omitted. In such cases the omitted sections of the score are indicated by the following sign: 
- Definition between new lines in the scores are indicated by the following sign: 
- Important motives or intervals are indicated with a bracket: .
- References to specific places in the score are indicated by an arrow, or a bracket with an arrow, to assist the reader: .
- Bar numbers are always placed in the bottom left hand corner of the score.
- Transposing instruments will be pointed out and explained.
- When referring to specific bar numbers the term "measure" is used: m. = measure, mm. = measures.

1.7 The Symphonies

In the following section Shostakovich's 15 symphonies and their movements will be listed. An approximate duration of the symphonies will be given as well as their première dates, the places of their first performance, the completion dates, and the first conductors.

Symphony No. 1 in F minor, Op. 10

Movements:

1. Allegretto
2. Allegro
3. Lento
4. Allegro

Duration: c. 35 minutes

Completion date: 1 July 1925

Première: 12 May 1926, Leningrad, conducted by Nicolai Malko.

Symphony No. 2 in B, Op. 14, "To October"

In one movement

Duration: c. 21 minutes

Completion date: June 1927

Première: 6 November 1927, Leningrad, conducted by Nicolai Malko.

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat, Op. 20, "First of May"

In one movement

Duration: c. 27 minutes

Completion date: July 1929

Première: 21 January 1930, Leningrad, conducted by Alexandr Gauk.

Symphony No. 4 in C minor, Op. 43

Movements:

1. Allegro poco moderato

2. Moderato con moto

3. Largo - allegro

Duration: c. 70 minutes

Completion date: 20 May 1936. Withdrawn from rehearsal: December 1936.

Première: 30 December 1961, Moscow, conducted by Kyril Kondrashin.

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

Movements:

1. Moderato

2. Allegretto

3. Largo

4. Allegro non troppo

Duration: c. 45 minutes

Completion date: July 1937

Première: 21 November 1937, Leningrad, conducted by Yevgyeni Mravinsky.

Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 54

Movements:

1. Largo

2. Allegro

3. Presto

Duration: c. 32 minutes

Completion date: October 1939

Première: 5 November 1939, Leningrad, conducted by Yevgyeni Mravinsky.

Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 60, "Leningrad"

Movements:

1. Allegretto

2. Moderato (poco allegretto)

3. Adagio

4. Allegro non troppo

Duration: c. 73 minutes

Completion date: 27 December 1941

Première: 5 March 1942, Kuibyshev, conducted by Samuel Samosud.

Symphony No. 8 in C minor, Op. 65

Movements:

1. Adagio
2. Allegretto
3. Allegro molto
4. Largo
5. Allegretto

Duration: c. 53 minutes

Completion date: 9 September 1943

Première: 4 November 1943, Moscow, conducted by Yevgyeni Mravinsky.

Symphony No. 9 in E-flat major, Op. 70

Movements:

1. Allegro
2. Moderato - adagio
3. Presto
4. Largo
5. Allegretto - allegro

Duration: c. 24 minutes

Completion date: August 1945

Première: 3 November 1945, Leningrad, conducted by Yevgyeni Mravinsky.

Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93

Movements:

1. Moderato
2. Allegro
3. Allegretto

4. Andante - allegro

Duration: c. 50 minutes

Completion date: 25 October 1953

Première: 17 December 1953, Leningrad, conducted by Yevgyeni Mravinsky.

Symphony No. 11 in G minor, Op. 103, “The Year 1905”

Movements:

1. Palace Square: Adagio
2. 9th of January: Allegro
3. Eternal Memory: Adagio
4. Alarm: Allegro non troppo

Duration: c. 57 minutes

Completion date: July 1957

Première: 30 October 1957, Moscow, conducted by Nikolai Rachlin.

Symphony No. 12 in D minor, Op. 112, “The Year 1917”

Movements:

1. Revolutionary Petrograd: Moderato - allegro
2. Razliv: Adagio
3. Aurora: Allegro
4. The Dawn of Humanity: L’istesso tempo

Duration: c. 40 minutes

Completion date: July 1961

Première: 1 October 1961. Premiered at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

Conducted by Kyril Kondrashin.

Symphony No. 13 in B-flat minor, Op. 113, “Babi Yar”

Movements:

1. Babi Yar: Adagio
2. Humour: Allegretto
3. In the Grocery: Adagio

4. Fears: Largo

5. Career: Allegretto

Duration: c. 62 minutes

Completion date: August 1962

Première: 18 December 1962, Moscow, conducted by Kyril Kondrashin.

Symphony No. 14, Op. 135

Movements:

1. “De Profundis” (Largo) by García Lorca
2. “Malagueña” (Allegretto) by García Lorca
3. “Lorelei” (Allegro molto) by Apollinaire
4. “The Suicide” (Adagio) by Apollinaire
5. “Waiting I” by Apollinaire
6. “Waiting II” by Apollinaire
7. “In Prison” by Apollinaire
8. “Answer of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to the Sultan of Constantinople” by Apollinaire
9. “O Delvig, Delvig” (Andante) by Küchelbecker
10. “The Death of a Poet” (Largo) by Rilke
11. Conclusion: “Almighty Death” by Rilke

Duration: c. 42 minutes

Completion date: January 1969

Première: 29 September 1969, Leningrad, Rudolf Barshay conducting the Moscow Chamber Orchestra with soloists Galina Vishnyevskaya (soprano), and Mark Reshetin (bass).

Symphony No. 15 in A major, Op. 141

Movements:

1. Allegretto
2. Adagio
3. Allegretto
4. Adagio - allegretto

Duration: c. 43 minutes

Completion date: August 1971

Première: 8 January 1972, Moscow, conducted by Maxim Shostakovich.

1.8 Final object of the dissertation

It is hoped that the study will contribute to deeper knowledge and understanding of Shostakovich's symphonic writing, especially for the oboe and cor anglais, which will benefit oboists, double reed instrumentalists, music students and general listeners.