

**THE WOODWINDS IN THE SYMPHONIES OF DMITRI  
SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to closely scrutinise specific elements in Shostakovich's use of the woodwinds in his symphonies in an effort to find aspects typical of the composer's orchestral style. These facts are viewed in the light of the profound effect the socio-political and personal events had on the composer's artistic and aesthetic development.

Preceded by a thorough study of each woodwind instrument, the woodwind parts of the Shostakovich symphonies were carefully examined. All findings were catalogued in a card system. After the investigation, more information was sourced from the latest biographies and books on Soviet Russian culture and politics. Relevant historical facts were gradually incorporated.

The first chapter is introductory and supplies general information. A brief biography of Shostakovich, influences on the composer and his orchestration, follow in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 to 11 contain the most important findings of the study, while Chapter 12 consists of a summary of the most important conclusions drawn. Appendix A contains the instrumentation of Shostakovich's symphonies. Appendix B has the English translations to the Russian texts used in Symphonies No. 2, 3 and 13. A chronological list of Shostakovich's works, arranged more or less by opus number, is included as Appendix C. In Appendix D a list of music examples quoted in this thesis is offered. This is followed by the list of sources.

The most important conclusions are:

- Shostakovich has a thorough understanding of each woodwind instrument's lyrical and technical capabilities by scoring accessible material perfectly suited to each instrument.
- Shostakovich reveals an uncluttered and basically conservative style of orchestration for the woodwinds and hardly uses any special effects and devices.
- Of the auxiliary instruments the piccolo is favoured, but limited use is made of the alto flute and contrabassoon.

- Shostakovich's development as orchestrator is exemplified in the woodwind parts of his symphonies, particularly his trend toward a more ensemble-like style in the later symphonies.
- The woodwind parts of the symphonies reveal, at times, strong emotive content that bear affirmation of severe socio-political pressure and criticism endured by Shostakovich.

## OPSOMMING

Die doel van die studie was om spesifieke elemente van Sjostakowitsj se gebruik van die houtblasers in sy vyftien simfonieë noukeurig te ondersoek, ten einde tipiese eienskappe van die komponis se tegniese en artistieke styl te bepaal. Hierdie gegewens word gesien in die lig van die diepgaande uitwerking wat sosio-politieke en persoonlike gebeurtenisse op die komponis se artistieke en estetiese ontwikkeling gehad het.

Elke houtblaasinstrument is deeglik bestudeer, waarna die houtblaaspartye in Sjostakowitsj se simfonieë sorgvuldig nagegaan is. Bevindings is deur middel van 'n kaartjiesisteen gekatalogiseer. Na die analise is meer informasie uit die jongste biografieë en boeke oor die Sowjet-Russiese kultuur en politiek versamel. Toepaslike geskiedkundige feite is geleidelik in die verslag ingesluit.

Die eerste hoofstuk is inleidend en verskaf algemene inligting. In Hoofstuk 2 volg 'n kort biografie en 'n bespreking van invloede en orkestrasie en Hoofstuk 3-11 bevat die belangrikste bevindings van die ontleding. Hoofstuk 12 bestaan uit 'n opsomming van die belangrikste gevolgtrekkings van die studie. Bylae A bevat die instrumentasie van Sjostakowitsj se simfonieë en Bylae B bestaan uit Engelse vertalings van die Russiese tekste wat in Simfonie nr 2, 3 en 13 gebruik is. 'n Chronologiese lys van Sjostakowitsj se werke, ongeveer volgens hulle opusnommers gerangskik, word as Bylae C ingesluit. In Bylae D word 'n lys musiekvoorbeelde aangebied. Dit word gevolg deur die bronnelys.

Die belangrikste bevindings is die volgende:

- Sjostakowitsj wys deeglike begrip vir elke houtblaasinstrument se liriese en tegniese moontlikhede deurdat hy toeganklike materiaal orkestreer wat perfek by elke instrument pas.
- Sjostakowitsj toon 'n lenige en hoofsaaklik konserwatiewe styl in sy orkestrasie vir houtblaasinstrumente. Hy maak min van spesiale effekte en uitsonderlike moontlikhede gebruik.

- Onder die addisionele (hulp-) instrumente gee hy voorkeur aan die piccolo, maar die altfluit en kontrafagot word min benut.
- Sjostakowitsj se ontwikkeling as orkestreerder word geïllustreer in die houtblaaspartye van sy simfonieë, veral die neiging tot 'n meer ensemble-agtige styl in die latere simfonieë.
- Die houtblaaspartye in die simfonieë openbaar soms 'n sterk emosionele inhoud wat die strawwe sosiopolitieke druk en kritiek wat Sjostakowitsj moes verduur, bevestig.

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## KEY WORDS

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Symphonies  
Woodwinds  
Analysis  
Piccolo  
Flute  
Alto flute  
Oboe  
Cor anglais  
E-flat clarinet  
Clarinet  
Bass clarinet  
Bassoon  
Contrabassoon

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